A Practical Health Check for Your Website's On-Page SEO

When you run a local business in Chesterfield, getting your website to show up in search results can feel like a guessing game. You put up pages, write content, and hope Google picks them up. But search engines rely on clear signals to understand and rank a page. If those signals are weak or broken, your site stays invisible, no matter how good your services are.

The good news is that many of these signals live right on your pages. Fixing them doesn't require a technical background. It requires a methodical approach. Below is a set of checks that help you find and fix common issues. Each point comes with a short reason why it matters, so you know what to prioritise.

Check crawlability first

Before a search engine can rank your page, it needs to find it. Crawlability is the technical foundation that lets Googlebot discover your URLs. Start by reviewing your robots.txt file. This file tells search engines which parts of your site to ignore. A misplaced disallow directive can block entire sections, including your product or service pages. Use a tool like the robots.txt tester in Google Search Console to spot problems.

Next, check your sitemap. An XML sitemap lists every page you want indexed. If it is missing, outdated, or includes noindex pages, search engines may miss important content. Submit your sitemap through Search Console and monitor the report for errors. Also look at your internal links. A page with no internal links pointing to it is like a room with no door. Google may never find it. Review your navigation and main content links to ensure every key page is reachable within a few clicks from the homepage.

Verify indexing signals

Even if a search engine can crawl your page, it may choose not to index it. Indexing is the process of storing a page in the search engine's database. Without that, no one finds you. Check that every page you want indexed has a meta robots tag set to "index, follow". Avoid using "noindex" on pages meant for public search. Also look at the canonical tag. This tells Google which version of a URL is the primary one. If you have duplicate content, a missing or conflicting canonical tag can split ranking signals or cause the wrong page to rank.



For local businesses, make sure your location pages and service pages are set to index. A common mistake is using a CMS that sets new pages to "noindex" by default. Log into your site and inspect the source code of a few key URLs to confirm the tag is correct.

Examine page speed and mobile usability

Page speed directly affects both user experience and search rankings. A slow page frustrates visitors and increases bounce rates. Google's Core Web Vitals measure load time, responsiveness, and visual stability. Run a test on your homepage and a few inner pages using PageSpeed Insights. Look for specific recommendations, such as compressing images, leveraging browser caching, or minifying CSS and JavaScript. Each fix improves load time.

Mobile usability is equally important. More than half of web traffic comes from mobile devices. Test your site on a real phone or use Google's mobile-friendly test. Check that text is readable without zooming, buttons are large enough to tap, and content fits the screen width. A site that is hard to navigate on mobile will lose both visitors and ranking positions.

Refine metadata for every page

Metadata includes the title tag and meta description that appear in search results. These are the first impression a searcher gets of your page. Write unique title tags for each page, keeping them under 60 characters. Include your primary keyword naturally, but also make the title compelling for a human reader. The meta description, though not a direct ranking factor, influences click-through rate. Keep it around 155 characters, summarising the page's value, and include a call to action.

Check that no title tags are missing, duplicated, or auto-generated. Use a crawl tool or a simple site search in Google with "site:yourdomain.com" to see how your pages appear. If you see multiple pages with the same title, that is a sign of thin or duplicated metadata that needs editing.

Audit internal links for structure and value

Internal links do more than help navigation. They distribute ranking authority across your pages and help search engines understand the relationship between content. A page that links to another passes some of its own authority, known as link equity. Use descriptive anchor text that tells both users and search engines what the linked page is about. Avoid generic phrases like "click here" or "read more".



Look for orphan pages: pages with no internal links pointing to them. These are invisible to crawlers unless submitted via sitemap. Also watch for too many links on a single page, which can dilute value. A good rule is to keep the number of links per page under a hundred, and prioritise links that are most relevant to the page's topic. Regularly review your site's link graph to ensure key service pages receive enough internal support.

Add structured data for rich results

Structured data is a standardised format for providing information about a page. It helps search engines understand the content, and can enable rich results like star ratings, event times, or business hours. For a local business, implementing LocalBusiness schema can

display your address, phone number, and opening times directly in search results. This increases visibility and trust.

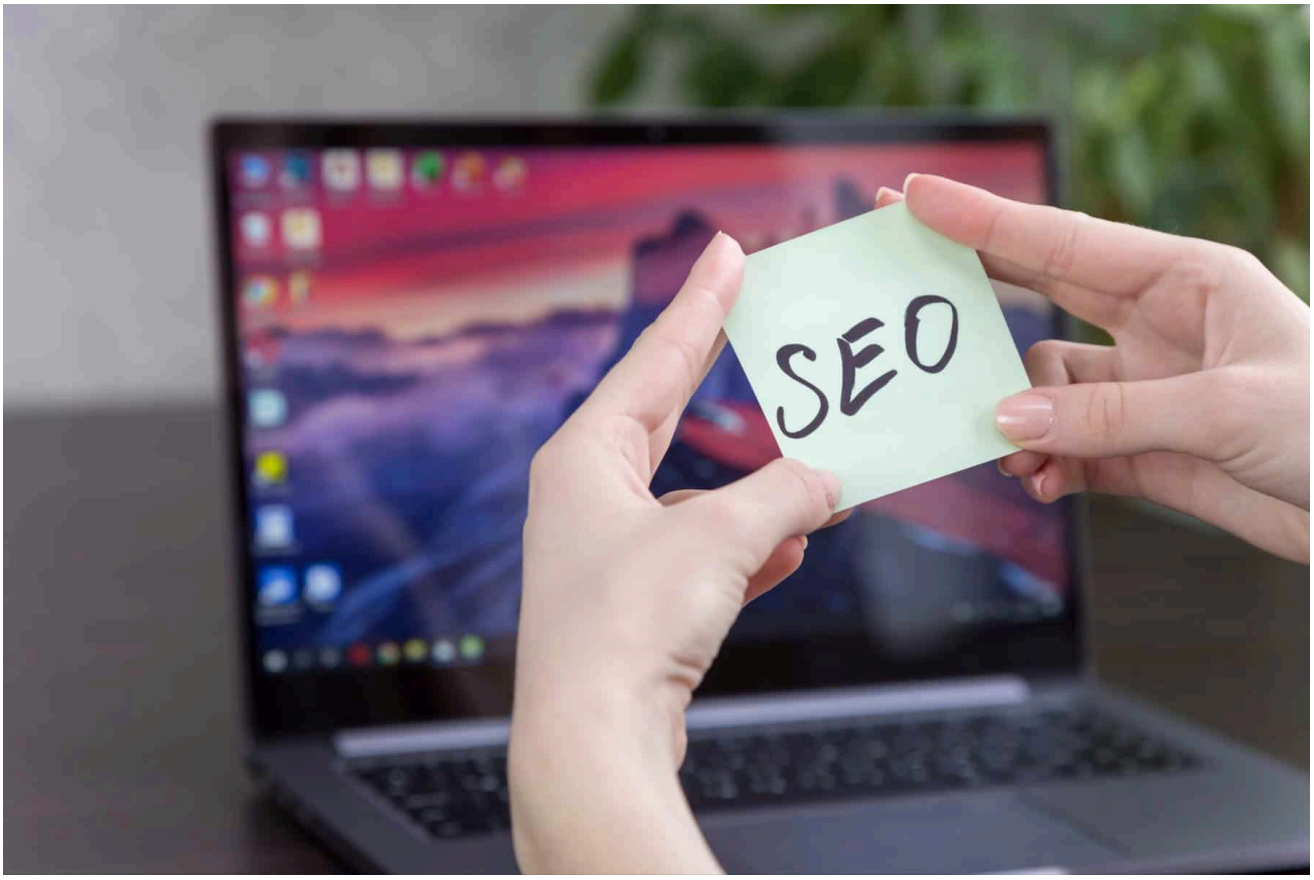
Use a testing tool like Google's Rich Results Test to validate your markup. Start with one or two high-value pages, such as your contact page or a service page. Avoid adding schema for features you do not have, as that can trigger a manual action. Keep the markup clean and accurate.

Optimise for user experience

User experience and SEO are closely linked. A page that loads fast, is easy to read, and answers the visitor's question will rank better over time. Check that your content is scannable. Use short paragraphs, subheadings, and bullet points where appropriate. Ensure your font size is legible on all devices, and that the colour contrast between text and background meets accessibility standards.

Also review your site's navigation structure. Visitors should find what they need in three clicks or fewer. A clear hierarchy helps both users and search engines understand the importance of each section. If your site has a high bounce rate on certain pages, consider whether the content matches the intent behind the search query that brought the visitor there.

All of these checks contribute to one goal: improving site performance in search. When you fix crawl errors, speed up pages, and write clear metadata, you give search engines the signals they need to rank your site higher. The process does not happen overnight, but each small improvement compounds over time.



For Chesterfield businesses, the local competition is real. A well-maintained site that passes these checks will outrank a neglected one, even if both offer similar services. Start with the items that are easiest to fix, such as metadata and internal links. Then move to technical areas like page speed and structured data. Repeat the audit every few months, because search engines update their algorithms and your site evolves. Consistent attention to these details is the most reliable way of keeping your site healthy and visible.

Remember that on-page SEO is not a one-time project. It is an ongoing practice. The checklist above gives you a starting point. Apply it, measure the results, and adjust as needed. Over time, you will see the payoff in better rankings, more traffic, and more leads from customers who actually find you online. And that is the whole point of **improving site performance in search**.